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Letter dated 11 August 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward herewith the concept note for the Security Council briefing on the topic "Consolidating Security Council engagement on security sector reform: towards further implementation of resolution 2151 (2014)", scheduled to be held on Thursday, 20 August 2015 (see annex).

It would be appreciated if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) U. Joy **Ogwu**
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Annex to the letter dated 11 August 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Consolidating Security Council engagement on security sector reform: towards further implementation of resolution 2151 (2014)

Concept note for the Security Council briefing on 20 August 2015

Background

On 28 April 2014, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2151 (2014), the first stand-alone resolution on security sector reform (SSR). It underlined that the reform of the security sector in post-conflict environments is critical not only to the consolidation of peace and security but also to promoting the rule of law and good governance, extending legitimate State authority and preventing States from relapsing into conflict.

The Council reaffirmed, inter alia, the sovereign right and primary responsibility of countries to determine their national approach to and priorities for SSR and recognized that, in this respect, SSR is a nationally owned process that must remain rooted in a country's particular needs and conditions.

Regarding the role of the United Nations, the Council recognized the centrality of SSR as a key element of peacekeeping operation and special political mission mandates, noted the increasing number and complexity of mission mandates on SSR, and emphasized the importance of the United Nations, including through its peacekeeping operations and special political missions, in supporting national Governments, upon their request where appropriate, to develop security institutions that are accessible and responsive to the needs of their population, as well as coordinate international SSR assistance, in partnership with regional and subregional arrangements and organizations.

Recognizing that SSR constitutes a key element of the political processes of States recovering from conflict, the Council also acknowledged the need for the United Nations to balance its support for the reform of individual components of the security sector, which in some contexts includes defence, police, corrections, and border and immigration services, with sector-wide initiatives that address strategic governance, management and oversight aspects in order to ensure their viability and sustainability, based on the particular needs and conditions of the country in question.

Challenges

The trend in the increasing number and complexity of Security Council mandates on SSR has continued since the adoption of resolution 2151 (2014). The Council adopted in the past 16 months no fewer than 20 country-specific resolutions that mandate 10 United Nations peace operations to implement an increasingly wide range of SSR tasks.

At the political level, the Security Council has tasked peace operations to provide good offices to and political support for the SSR efforts of national authorities. At the sector-wide level, United Nations operations have been mandated to support the development and implementation of national security policies and

strategies (based on national dialogues), the establishment of security sector-wide coordination mechanisms, such as national security councils, and strengthening civilian oversight of security institutions. At the component level, United Nations operations have been tasked to advise on reforms of the armed and internal security services, provide training to public security providers and support the vetting of serving personnel of security institutions and new recruits. Finally, the Council has consistently tasked peace operations to support national authorities in their efforts to coordinate international assistance to SSR.

In view of its increased focus on SSR, the Security Council has requested the Secretary-General to report on peace operations' support to nationally led SSR initiatives, as well as progress accomplished by host States. The Secretary-General's regular reports have highlighted a number of challenges common to United Nations engagement in this critical area:

- SSR is a political process as much as a technical one. The political nature of SSR points to the need for the United Nations, as well as other international actors, to fully understand and be responsive to the political context and to support national stakeholders, as a priority, in addressing the political imperatives of SSR in specific contexts.
- United Nations support to SSR must start early, well before the deployment of a peace operation. In this respect, the United Nations should ensure that SSR is included in international mediation efforts at the outset of peace processes.
- The United Nations has faced challenges in securing the commitment of national authorities (including transitional entities) to holding national dialogues on SSR, forging a common national vision for security and developing national security policies, strategies and plans. Where appropriate, the United Nations should be available to support national authorities in developing and convening the international community around such plans, until national authorities are able to do so themselves.
- The environment of United Nations peace operations is increasingly unstable and challenging as a result of emerging asymmetric threats. However, successful SSR in post-conflict contexts requires space in terms of national security. Without security space, reform efforts are likely to be constrained by increasing insecurity. In the context of active insurgency or violent extremism, host States are legitimately concerned with ensuring effective operational responses to such immediate security threats. Keeping the focus of the host State on SSR in such contexts is highly challenging.
- The delivery of effective and coherent United Nations-wide solutions to complex national security concerns remains challenging. Accordingly, the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations called for better coordination, with a specific recommendation on strengthening the coordination and convening role of special representatives of the Secretary-General in the area of SSR.

Scope

Against this background, Nigeria will convene a briefing on how the Security Council might improve its engagement on SSR and to identify key priorities in the

implementation of resolution 2151 (2014). This briefing intends to provide Council members with the opportunity to reflect on two key questions:

1. How can the Security Council strengthen United Nations support to nationally led SSR efforts in peace operation contexts?

2. How can the Security Council remain actively seized of such support, as well as the further implementation of resolution 2151 (2014) more generally?

In addressing these questions, Council members might wish to consider the following:

1. How can the Security Council strengthen collaboration between host States and peace operations in the area of SSR? Subsequently, what SSR areas does the Council mandate the United Nations to support? Are there common tasks? How can the Council support the United Nations in implementing SSR-related tasks?

- The Security Council could engage in closer consultations with host States during mandate negotiations in order to determine SSR priorities.
- The Security Council could request the host State and the United Nations to agree on an SSR compact, which provides a framework for mutual accountability and predictability, and clarity of roles.
- The Security Council could further empower special representatives of the Secretary-General to support the emergence of nationally owned SSR policy and implementation frameworks (including "train and equip" and security sector-wide governance dimensions) and to convene international partners around them.
- The Security Council could further recognize the importance of United Nations partnerships with regional organizations, in particular with the African Union, in supporting SSR.
- The Security Council could ensure better balance between sector-wide (e.g. governance) and component-level (e.g. training and equipping) tasks.

2. Is the timing and sequencing of SSR-related tasks assigned to United Nations peace operations appropriate? Are SSR-related tasks adequately prioritized in resolutions?

- The Security Council could mandate peace operations to address SSR at the onset of the peace process and throughout the mission's life cycle until its liquidation (the most important criterion for a peace operation's exit remains the capacity of national security institutions to provide security to the population in an effective and accountable manner).
- The Security Council could recognize that, in the absence of a peace agreement, in a transitional context where national security institutions are barely existent (e.g. the Central African Republic during the transition), United Nations support to SSR is required in the first phase of peace operations, including: (a) helping the national authorities to elaborate an inclusive vision, based on security threats, for its new security architecture; and (b) based on this vision, facilitating reconciliation by identifying integration possibilities for ex-combatants in the relevant security institutions.

- Similarly, the Security Council could recognize that the first condition for a mission's exit strategy should be an enhanced capacity of national security institutions to protect civilians in a professional, peaceful, sustainable and accountable manner.

3 How can the Security Council strengthen its oversight of United Nations engagement in supporting national SSR efforts in peace operation contexts and in further implementing resolution 2151 (2014)?

- The Security Council could consider further requesting the Secretary-General and his special representatives to provide/include comprehensive updates on United Nations support to SSR in regular country-specific reports and briefings. In this respect, the Secretary-General's reports could: (a) provide a thorough analysis of political and sector-wide strategic developments in the security sector; (b) analyse United Nations SSR support at both the sector-wide and component levels; and (c) identify areas for improvement.
- The Security Council could request the Secretary-General to submit a prioritized plan of action for the implementation of resolution 2151 (2014). This could subsequently be followed by reports of the Secretary-General on the actualization of such a plan of action.
- The Security Council could request the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to provide an annual closed-session briefing on the implementation of resolution 2151 (2014) in peace operations contexts.
- The Security Council could undertake one expert-level mission per year to a peace operation tasked to support national SSR efforts.